

# **U.S. Department of Labor**

## **Evaluating the Accessibility of American Job Centers for People with Disabilities**

### ***Site Visit Instruments***

#### ***Focus Group Moderator's Guide***

**April 8, 2014**

#### ***Submitted to:***

U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20210

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

	Page
<b>PART A: DRAFT FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR’S GUIDE.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Focus Group Overview.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of the Focus Group Sessions.....	1
1.2 Focus Group Participants.....	1
1.3 Participant Selection.....	1
<b>2. Moderator and Note Taker Roles and Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>1</b>
2.1 Role of the Moderator.....	2
2.2 Role of the Note Taker.....	2
<b>3. Focus Group Preparation.....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Room Arrangements.....	3
3.2 Pre-Group Logistics.....	3
<b>4. Focus Group Protocol.....</b>	<b>3</b>
4.1 Opening and Introduction.....	4
4.2 Participant Confidentiality.....	5
4.3 Participant Consent and Agreement.....	5
4.4 Focus Group Definition and Working Procedures.....	5
4.5 Focus Group Discussion Questions.....	6
<b>5. Post-Focus Group Activities.....</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM</b>	 <b>Appendix 1-1</b>

**PART A:**

**FOCUS GROUP  
MODERATOR'S GUIDE**

## **PART A: FOCUS GROUP MODERATOR'S GUIDE**

---

### **1. Focus Group Overview**

As part of the broader study being conducted to assess the level of accessibility of American Job Centers (AJCs) to people with disabilities (PWD), the IMPAQ team will conduct focus groups at 10 AJCs that will be receiving site visits as part of the study's data collection activities. An overview of the focus groups to be conducted is presented below.

#### **1.1 Purpose of the Focus Group Sessions**

The purpose of the focus group sessions is to learn about the perspectives of PWD on the subject of AJC accessibility. The IMPAQ team will ask focus group participants questions about their experiences, perceptions, challenges, sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and support received prior to, during, and after receiving services from the AJC.

#### **1.2 Focus Group Participants**

To the extent possible and practical, each focus group will include 8-10 participants representing a range of individuals across the full spectrum of disabilities, including individuals with physical, sensory, mental, cognitive, and emotional disabilities.

#### **1.3 Participant Selection**

The IMPAQ team will work closely with the 10 AJCs selected to host focus groups to identify potential participants for the focus group sessions. We will provide the AJCs with specific guidance for identifying potential participants, focusing on PWD who have received services from the targeted AJC in the past year.

IMPAQ will work closely with the AJCs to identify any needed communication aids or supports for focus group participants (e.g., sign language interpreter) and either will request to use the AJC's contractor to provide such services for the focus group or will work with the AJC to identify an outside vendor to provide such services.

### **2. Moderator and Note Taker Roles and Responsibilities**

The IMPAQ team conducting the focus group will include a moderator who will lead the discussion and a note-taker who will support the focus group session logistics and be responsible for capturing the key points and detailed discussion. Below we provide an overview of the roles of the moderator and the note-taker.

## **2.1 Role of the Moderator**

The moderator's role includes:

- Ensure room arrangements are made and that participants are invited with sufficient notice
- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to focus group to ensure room is arranged appropriately
- Greet participants
- Explain study and purpose of the focus group to participants
- Moderate pacing of the focus group to ensure that all topics are covered as thoroughly as possible
- Facilitate the discussion to ensure the group stays on topic and that all participants have a chance to give their input
- Thank participants at the end of the focus group.

## **2.2 Role of the Note Taker**

The note taker's role includes:

- Arrive 15-30 minutes prior to the focus group to set-up room
- Help to greet participants
- Ensure that any participants requiring communication aids and devices are able to fully participate in the session
- Distribute and collect Participant Information Sheets (PIS) and Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate forms
- Take notes and operate the recorder during the focus group (if applicable)
- Ensure comments are accurately captured
- Collect all flip chart sheets and document the statements in the notes as appropriate.

## **3. Focus Group Preparation**

The IMPAQ team will work closely with the host AJC to ensure that appropriate facilities are available for the focus group sessions and that the facilities will be arranged in a way suitable for the sessions.

### 3.1 Room Arrangements

Below is a list of requirements for the rooms where the focus group sessions will be held:

- Focus group sessions should be held in a conference / training room provided by the host AJC that allows for confidential conversations to take place
- The room should be easily accessible to focus group participants who are PWD that may have limited mobility
- Any necessary communication aids or services should have been arranged for in advance of the focus group session and should be ready to be used at the start of the focus group session
- The room should be large enough to accommodate 10-14 individuals comfortably
- To facilitate conversation, participants should be seated around a conference table, in a U-shape, or chairs in a circle
- Each room should have at least one flip chart and markers.

### 3.2 Pre-Group Logistics

The Moderator and the Note Taker should greet participants as they arrive and ask them to take a seat and make themselves comfortable. If there are refreshments, encourage participants to help themselves.

The Note Taker should distribute the ***Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate Form*** and the ***Participant Information Form (Appendix 1)*** to each participant and ask him or her to complete the form while waiting for the focus group to begin. These documents:

- Request background information about the participants
- Describe the meeting format
- Detail the privacy protections that will be provided to participants
- Give the potential participant an opportunity to decline to participate.

The Moderator and the Note Taker should ask participants if they need any help in completing the forms.

## 4. Focus Group Protocol

The Moderator should formally welcome the focus group participants to the discussion and explain the purpose of the focus group and standard procedures (see below):

## 4.1 Opening and Introduction

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Thank you for coming today. My name is [MODERATOR NAME] and this is [NOTE TAKER NAME]. We work for [INSERT NAME OF ORGANIZATION]. We are part of a team of organizations, including IMPAQ International and the Burton Blatt Institute, that have been contracted by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor to lead this session.*

*My role, for the most part, is to make sure that we get through our agenda, keep to the time frame and make sure that you all have a chance to share your experiences. [NOTE TAKER NAME] will help me do these things, and will also be taking notes. In addition, we will be audio-taping the session, which will ensure that we record the discussion accurately. The discussion session today will last for about 1.5 hours.*

*The purpose of this focus group is to obtain input from people with disabilities, impairments, or health conditions about their experiences using American Job Center (Center) services. We are conducting focus groups at 10 centers like this one throughout the country. The results of these group discussions will be included in a report which will determine the degree to which American Job Centers are accessible to PWD that will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor.*

*It is important that we hear what has worked for you and what has not so that solutions can be developed that have practical application in centers across the country.*

*I know that some of you have gone out of your way to be here, and we genuinely appreciate your interest and willingness to share your experiences. We are eager to learn about your experiences at the center as well as your recommendations for any improvements regarding accessibility.*

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is <insert number> and the expiration date is <insert date>.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this survey is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes, including time for completing the Participant Information Form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Dr. Stefanie Schmidt at [schmidt.stefanie@dol.gov](mailto:schmidt.stefanie@dol.gov).

## 4.2 Participant Confidentiality

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Confidentiality and anonymity means that we will not share or use your name, address, or any other identifying information in reports or other materials related to this study. We will not identify any of the participants by name. All of the information we collect here today is confidential. All data will be pooled with data from similar sessions with participants in other focus groups being held throughout the United States and published in aggregate form only.*

*This research is being conducted under OMB Clearance Number \*\*\*-\*\*\*. If you wish to obtain more information about the overall study, you can contact the individuals listed at the bottom of your Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate [COLOR OF FORM] form.*

## 4.3 Participant Consent and Agreement

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*The Informed Consent and Agreement to Participate form will be our record that you have agreed to participate in the focus group and that you have agreed to be tape-recorded. Do you have any additional questions about the focus group or about the consent and participation form? If you do not have any further questions and have not signed and dated the consent form, please do so now.*

*Please pass the signed Informed Consent form and the completed Participant Information Form forward.*

After all participants have signed and turned in the Informed Consent and Participant Information Forms, hand out name tags (first name only) to all participants.

## 4.4 Focus Group Definition and Working Procedures

The Moderator should read the following statement:

*Let me begin our discussion by reviewing a few ground rules about how we will conduct the session.*

*This focus group is a way for us to listen to people and learn from them. During this discussion, we would like you to focus on topics that are of particular interest to us. We are interested in what everyone has to say about our discussion topics. If someone throws out an idea that you want to expand on, or if you have a different point of view, please feel free to speak up. Occasionally, I may have to interrupt the*



*discussion in order to bring us back to a particular topic to make sure that we cover everything on our agenda.*

*There are a couple of common-sense guidelines that we will follow during this session:*

- 1. In this type of group setting, it is important for everyone to get involved and express their opinions openly. We want all of you to express your honest opinions about the discussion topics – we are interested in multiple points of view on the topics. There may be differences of opinion, but there are no right or wrong answers and we are not here to resolve any issues you may bring up.*
- 2. Please do not hold “side conversations” – don’t talk individually to other participants during the session. We want to be able to hear from everyone, and we want you to hear what everyone else has to say. Because we are also recording the session, it would really help us if you could speak up so that everyone can hear you. I would also very much appreciate it if you would state your first name the first couple of times you speak.*

*If there are no other questions, let’s begin the discussion.*

#### **4.5 Focus Group Discussion Questions**

##### **I. Participant Introductions**

Ask each participant to introduce him or herself and to briefly tell the group something about themselves, such as a favorite activity. The Moderator should start with his or her own introduction and favorite activity.

During this process, the Note Taker should make sure that the recording equipment is working appropriately and that the microphone is picking up all voices in the room.

##### **II. Initial Contact with the AJC**

*This first set of questions is focused on your initial interactions with the Center.*

1. How did you first learn about the Center?
  - If you received a referral from another organization or agency, who did you receive the referral from?
2. Did any of you learn about the AJC from the AJC’s website?
  - If so, did you find that the website provided information that was helpful to you?
  - Did you find that the website addressed issues related to your specific needs?

### III. Physical Accessibility of the AJC

*The next set of questions is focused on the physical accessibility of the Center and any accommodations the Center made to assist you.*

1. When you first came to visit the AJC, how did you get there (i.e., public transportation, paratransit, drove yourself, a friend or family member gave you a ride, referring agency provided transportation)?
  - Did any of you experience any difficulties in getting to and from the Center?
  - How long did it take you to get to the Center? Did you have to travel far?
  - How safe did you feel coming to the Center?
  - For those of you who drove yourself or were driven by someone:
    - Were you able to find parking close by?
    - Were there clearly marked parking spots for PWD?
2. Let's talk about your ability to get around within the Center and use the resources within the center.
  - How easy or difficult was it to enter the Center? Was an accessible entrance clearly marked?
  - Once inside, how easy or difficult was it to maneuver?
  - Did you have any difficulties entering or maneuvering in any of the rooms or the restrooms? If so, please describe the challenges you faced.
  - Did anyone have any problems using a drinking fountain, a public telephone, or an elevator?
  - Did anyone make use of the computers available at the Center? Were the computers equipped with software/technology you needed?
  - Did any of you need assistive technology at the Center?
    - Were Center staff able to help you access the assistive technology?
    - Was there any assistive technology you needed that wasn't available? If so, please describe.
  - Were the signs posted around the Center adequate for you?
3. Were there any other issues you faced regarding the physical accessibility of the center and its resources that you want to share?

### IV. Communications with Center Staff

*The next set of questions is focused on communications with staff at the Center.*

1. How were your initial interactions with the staff?
  - Did you identify yourself as a person with a disability? How was this brought up – were you asked about your disability by Center staff or did you volunteer this information to them?
  - How knowledgeable did Center staff seem regarding working with PWD?
  - How comfortable did Center staff seem regarding working with PWD?
  - Were there any specific things that staff did or did not do to make you feel welcome or not welcome at the Center?
  
2. Did anyone have any difficulties in communicating with Center staff and in understanding any of the materials/information provided to you?
  - Did you have any difficulties understanding the information in any of the materials given to you? Was Center staff willing to assist you in understanding the materials? If so, how did they do this?
  - Was the staff willing to talk with you through an interpreter or through text messaging in order to provide information and answer questions – if you needed this?
  - If you prefer to get most of your information in writing, were you able to obtain all of the written information you needed?
  - Did you ask for any materials in an alternative format? Did the staff get those materials to you right away?
  - If you need extra time in filling out forms or doing other tasks, did the staff make sure you had all the extra time you needed?
  - If you like to have a quiet place to read or work, did the staff provide that for you?
  - Did you have any difficulties contacting the Center in order to get additional information (i.e., using the AJC’s Web site, email, regular telephone, a telephone relay service, or through a TTD/TTY)?

#### **IV. Services Received from the Center**

*The final area we want to ask about is the types of services you received from the Center.*

1. How did you learn about the different types of services the Center offers, including those that you were eligible for?
  - Did any of you receive a tour of the Center or an orientation?
  - Were you clear about how you could access the services you were eligible for and interested in receiving?

- Did the staff give you written information about those services? If so, did it include information about how to request accommodations?
2. What services did you receive from the center?
    - Were the services you received offered to you in a way which enabled you to fully participate?
    - Were the services you received the same as persons without disabilities?
    - Did you receive the services on-site at the center or were you referred to a different agency or organization to receive the services?
      - If you were referred to a different agency, what agency were you referred to?
    - Were there any services that you were interested in obtaining that you did not have access to because of your disability?
  3. Did you ask for/receive any accommodations to assist you in participating in Center services?
    - Were these accommodations provided to you in a timely manner?
    - Were these accommodations the ones you had requested (or their equivalent)?

## V. Closing

1. If you had to assign a rating from 1 – 4 as to the accessibility of services at the Center where 1 is completely inaccessible and 4 is highly accessible, what rating would you give to:
  - Overall level of accessibility?
  - Physical accessibility (*The extent to which facilities are designed, constructed, or altered so that they are accessible and usable by PWD*)?
  - Communications accessibility (*The extent to which center staff and partner agencies are able to communicate with PWD as effectively as with others*)?
  - Programmatic accessibility (*The extent to which PWD have access to the full range of services available to all AJC customers regardless of disability (e.g., core, intensive, and training)*)?
2. Would you use the center again or recommend it to other PWD? Why or why not?
3. Are there any other topics related to the level of accessibility of services at the Center that we have not covered?

## 5. Post-Focus Group Activities

1. Thank the group for their participation and remind the group that this information will be handled in accordance with applicable privacy laws and individual names will not be used in any reports.
2. Explain to participants that everyone will receive a gift card for participating in the focus group session and how use of the gift card works.
  - Hand out pre-paid gift cards to focus group participants
  - Ask participant to sign the Gift Card Receipt Form
3. Coordinate with the AJC Host/Coordinator regarding any final issues related to the focus group.

## APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

---

The OMB Control Number for this information collection is <insert number> and the expiration date is <insert date>.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, persons are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number and expiration date. Responding to this survey is voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 90 minutes including completing the Participant Information Form. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information to Dr. Stefanie Schmidt at [schmidt.stefanie@dol.gov](mailto:schmidt.stefanie@dol.gov).

*[Note: Responses will be kept private to the extent permitted by law.]*

### What is your gender?

- Female                       Male

### How old are you?

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18 to 22 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 23 to 27 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 28 to 32 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 33 to 37 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 38 to 42 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 43 to 47 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 48 to 52 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 53 to 57 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 58 to 62 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 63 to 67 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 68 to 72 years | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 73 years  |

### What is your race/ethnicity?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian or Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> Asian or Pacific Islander          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black (African American)         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic (Latin-American, Mexican) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Hispanic White (Caucasian)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please Specify) _____       |

### What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some high school or less | <input type="checkbox"/> High school graduate/GED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some college             | <input type="checkbox"/> College graduate         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Some post-graduate work  | <input type="checkbox"/> Post-graduate degree     |

**What is your employment status?**

- Employed Full-time
- Employed Part-time
- Unemployed/Looking for work
- Student
- Homemaker
- Retired

**Has your experience with this workforce center involved (please check all that apply):**

- Utilizing resource room materials
- Attending workshops
- Meeting with a career counselor
- Receiving job training
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**What is your primary disability?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have a secondary disability?**

- No
- Yes (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_